

Message Text

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64

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12 MC-02 RSR-01 /135 W
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R 141545 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9002

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 2189

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SY AG UR

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN TROOPS TO SYRIA: KING PRESIDES AT SENDOFF

REF: RABAT 831

1. SUMMARY. KING REVIEWS DETACHMENT OF MOROCCAN TROOPS GOING TO SYRIA. EMPHASIS OF HIS REMARKS IS ON SACRED ISLAMIC DUTY TROOPS ARE TO PERFORM. MARCH PAST IS WELL STAGED. WHATEVER MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE, EVENT POLICALLY USEFUL FOR HASSAN; BUT HAS POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR US- MOROCCAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. KING HASSAN PRESENTED COLORS TO MOROCCAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO SYRIA AT MAY 14 CEREMONY AND PARADE IN RABAT MARKING 17 TH ANNIVERSARY FORMATION OF ROYAL ARMED FORCES. IN BRIEF SPEECH, BROADCAST NATIONWIDE, TO
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SYMBOLIC UNITS OF MEF WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY MARCHED IN REVIEW, KING SAID HE HAD NEVER BEEN SO MOVED SINCE FORMATION OF ARMY AS AT PRESENT MOMENT. MOROCCAN SOLDIERS, WHICH WERE FIRST " WAVE", KING SAID, WERE GOING TO PARTICIPATE IN FIGHT TO RESTORE JERUSALEM AND ITS SHRINES HOLY TO ISLAM IN GRATITUDE FOR PROTECTION, RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES ISLAM, THROUGH THE PROPHET, HAS GIVEN TO MOROCCO. IN SO DOING, TROOPS WOULD ALSO RESTORE PRIDE OF MUSLIMS.

3. APPROXIMATELY 1600 OFFICERS AND MEN OF MEF LED BY BRIG. GENERAL ABDESLAM SEFRIQUI THEN MARCHED SMARTLY BEFORE KING, CROWN PRINCE, MOULAY ABDALLAH, GOM OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS. ARMA REPORTS TROOPS WERE CARRYING BRAND NEW SOVIET ASSAULT WEAPONS AND ROCKET LAUNCHERS. NO OTHER EQUIPMENT INCLUDED IN BRIEF PARADE. EMBOFF IN CROWD, WHICH WAS KEPT WELL AWAY FROM REVIEWING STAND AT HEAD BOULEVARD MOHAMMED V, REPORTS PEOPLE APPEARED TO BE INTERESTED IN PARADE BUT NOT PARTICULARLY DEMONSTRATIVE. AND END OF CEREMONY, WHICH LASTED LESS THAN FORTY MINUTES, KING WALKED TO GROUP OF EXCITED SPECTATORS AND TOUCHED HANDS BEFORE RETURNING TO ROYAL PALACE.

COMMENT: WHATEVER MAY BE ITS MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE, SENDING OF MEF IS USEFUL POLITICAL GESTURE. FEW MOROCCANS, MILITARY OR CIVILIAN, COULD ARGUE WITH KING' S STATED GOAL OF SENDING MOROCCAN TROOPS TO FREE ISLAM' S HOLY PLACES FROM ISRAELI OCCUPATION, THEREBY RESTORING SELF- RESPECT OF ALL MUSLIMS. HOWEVER, WE HOPE FOR OUR SAKES AS WELL AS THEIRS THAT NONE OF THESE SOLDIERS IS HURT IN SYRIA. DAY FIRST MOROCCAN IS KILLED BY AN ISRAELI " PHANTOM" WILL INEVITABLY AFFECT US- MOROCCAN BILATERAL RELATIONS, NO MATTER HOW ANXIOUS KING IS TO IMPROVE THEM.
ROCKWELL

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